



From the Minister of State
The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP

Ann O'Driscoll
Director
North Bristol Sus Com
Bristol and Bath Science Park
Dirac Crescent
Emersons Green
Bristol
BS16 7FR

RAL
Department for
Transport

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3082
Fax: 020 7944 4492
E-Mail: theresa.villiers@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

Our Ref: MC/39694
Your ref:

14 MAY 2012

Dear Ms O'Driscoll

Thank you for your letter of 16 April, to the Secretary of State expressing your organisation's support for the case to fund four-tracking of the Filton Bank section of the railway in Bristol. I am replying in my capacity as Minister for rail.

I appreciate the local support for four-tracking Filton Bank as part of the wider Bristol Metro proposals to improve public transport in the city.

The rail industry has put forward four-tracking of Filton Bank as one of the schemes to be considered for funding in the next five year cycle of rail investment, from 2014-19, termed Control Period 5 (CP5). The case is set out in the supporting documentation to the Initial Industry Plan (IIP) 'Definition of proposed CP5 enhancements' (page 76) and can be viewed on the Network Rail website.

There are a number of rail enhancement opportunities in the Bristol area linked to renewals, electrification, the introduction of the Intercity Express trains and the re-letting of the Great Western franchise. Network Rail has run a series of Bristol Strategy Workshops with the rail industry and we are using the advice from these workshops to inform Government rail strategy development. We are working with Bristol City Council to review current and forecast passenger demand in the area, taking account of their plans for the Bristol Metro.

Later this Summer, the Government will publish our High Level Output Specification (HLOS2). This will set out the specification of the railway it wants the rail industry to provide for CP5. Alongside this we will announce the taxpayer funds available to fund these outputs.

Some of the very largest schemes may be directly referred to in the HLOS2 statement. However, the specification is likely to be couched in terms of the numbers of passengers and amount of freight the industry should seek to accommodate by 2019, rather than containing a long list of individual schemes.

In response to HLOS2, the rail industry will produce detailed plans, setting out the projects needed to achieve the outputs set by the Government. The independent Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) will review these plans during 2013 and determine which elements Network Rail should be funded to deliver, with work commencing in 2014.

However, the pace of electrification in the Bristol area and the need to re-signal sections before electrification means that a decision on whether to fund Filton Bank four-tracking may have to be taken late this year, ahead of this detailed industry plan. We are discussing this with Network Rail and the ORR.

I appreciate your taking time to contact me about this important issue and will take on board your representations when decisions are made on HLOS2 and the projects to be funded in the CP5 period.

Regards



THE RT. HON. THERESA VILLIERS